

THE BRITISH INSTITUTION FOR PROMOTING THE FINE ARTS.

THE Exhibition of the Works of British Artists now open here, although deficient in works of the highest class, contains many excellent pictures, and is superior, as a whole, to the collection last year. Sir Edwin Landseer has one picture, "Deer Pass" (59), which looks as if it had been knocked off in a hurry: it has much beauty, but is not up to the artist's own mark. Mr. Pickersgill, R.A. sends two: "A Monk of the Order of St. Francis" (151), is finely painted. Linnell's "Boar Hunt" (45), is a splendid piece of colour, but verges on coarseness. T. Danby's "Lake of Thun" we forget. In whatever room it hangs, the winter will pass pleasantly. J. Holland has some brilliant sketches, we can scarcely call them paintings. Ansdell has, amongst other works, a careful and effective picture of sheep, "The Common" (73). G. E. Hering has made a considerable advance; "The Island of Capri" (244), and "La Solitaire," may be instanced. We may say the same of E. A. Goodall, "The Interior of Cabaret, Brittany" (20), is one of his best works. Hodgson's "Choir of Norwich Cathedral," is an effective view, but shows want of knowledge of forms. Branwhite is most at home in the snow; (328) "The Snow Drift," is a good specimen. "Scene during a Festa, Naples," by Clement Burlison (475), ought to have been on the line. "Snake Catchers of Syria" (317), by Willes Maddox, very properly is so; it is one of the cleverest works in the gallery. Sant has two, "A Mother's Hope" (162), and "Music" (503), both of great merit. John Wilson, jun. has produced a large picture, "On the Coast of Normandy" (310), fresh and breezy. Frost has two delicate pictures of Nymphs; and J. D. Wingfield a sparkling view of the "Interior of the Great Exhibition on the memorable 1st of May." M'Innes, in 517, "The Festal Band," has not kept the promise of his earlier works; and Isokipp will damage his reputation by such exhibitions as "A Bird Tender," whose feet and legs evidently do not belong to the head they carry. "The Princess Elizabeth examined, touching her Religious Opinions," by Gardiner and others" (57), by F. Newenham, is the picture of largest endeavour in the collection, and has parts of excellence. (113) "Lady and Child," by Le Jeune; (140) "Italian Peasant Girl," by Buckner; (209) "Hush," by Mrs. Carpenter; Jutsum's "Ivy Bridge" (69), and "Mountain Spring" (321); Brocky's "Whistle" (236); "The Acropolis of Athens," by Lear; heads by Gale; G. Hardy's "Cottage Interior," (455); "The Port of London" (157), by H. Dawson, are all noticeable works.

ROYAL ACADEMY LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE.

PROFESSOR COCKERELL, in his fourth lecture, dwelt with considerable emphasis on the importance of honesty of purpose, and truth of expression, in an architectural design. Controlled in his works by absolute utility, the architect was bound to explain their purpose by their external physiognomy. If the frame-work of the design was skillfully put together, the motive for ornament would be thereby obtained, and the building would invest itself with that appropriate decoration which belonged to it as a complete work. This important principle had been successfully carried out by Vignola in a villa near the Porta del Popolo at Rome; the plan and elevations of which edifice the lecturer explained in detail. That work he described as full of beauty and grace of conception, and worthy of the most careful attention of the student. It was the common error of ambitious architects to develop form and beauty first, and conform to use and necessity afterwards; a course which could only lead to mannerism and poverty of conception. Nothing indeed could be more essential than a careful attention to the purpose of a building, in order to adapt the design to that purpose, whether in the case of a church, a theatre, a palace, a villa, a mansion, or a cenotaph. The front of

St. Peter's was a notorious instance of a sin against character; presenting the aspect rather of a gorgeous palace than a sacred edifice. Its principal floor has balconies of an ordinary kind, whilst a mezzanine floor, and an attic order, add to the incongruity of the design. St. Paul's, on the contrary, is far superior in that respect. The uniformity of the double order throughout the exterior and interior of the building is an especial merit, producing an admirable effect of strength; whilst the upper order in the west front would be far better adapted for the ceremony of the papal benediction than the window of St. Peter's, from which it is now performed.

In the church of St. Andrea, at Mantua, by Alberti, the section of the nave and aisles was reproduced in the principal front with excellent effect; but this arrangement might be seen in a much earlier work,—the west front of Peterborough cathedral.

Propriety of expression and adaptation of form to purpose were much neglected in England in the early part of the present century; when the rage for Grecian architecture almost led many persons to fancy themselves gods, dwelling in heathen temples, without windows or chimneys. The fenestral order, so essential in this climate, had been thus completely lost sight of; but its great importance to architectural effect would be at once acknowledged by referring to the church of San Michele, at Venice, which abounds with windows, although the order employed is Doric. As a striking instance of misapplied design, the mansion of a nobleman not far from London might be held up as a warning: whilst a part of its exterior bore the appearance of a chapel, the interior of that portion was appropriated to a servants' hall, with a billiard-room above, and over that a kind of barrack-room for servants.

After some eloquent remarks on the great importance of fixed principles in art as well as in morals, the lecturer proceeded to point out some of the sources of architectural grandeur or greatness. The actual magnitude of a large edifice often failed to produce grandeur, or even an appearance of great size. Of this, again, St. Peter's was a striking instance; the first impression of that gigantic structure being generally one of disappointment. Ancient writers had noticed the same defect in the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Farnese Hercules; which they compared to great disadvantage with much smaller works of grand design and expression. The nave of Westminster Abbey, on the contrary, might be cited as realising a grand result, with little comparative magnitude. The power of producing grandeur of proportion was, indeed, the gift of genius; and the painter who possessed it could convey the idea of a space equal to that of the Crystal Palace in a drawing only 6 inches square.

An important source of architectural grandeur might be found in the number and quantity of inferior elements. This principle of multitude was acted upon by the Gothic architects, who produced great effect by employing stones of small size; and a chief cause of failure in modern Gothic structures arose from the use of stones too large in their scantling for the due effect of the style of design. So strongly were our ancestors impressed with this feeling, that where they used a plaster ceiling, as they sometimes did, they marked upon its surface an imitation of the joints of stones; and where large stones were necessarily employed, their surfaces were engraved in a reticulated pattern, as in the main spandrels of Westminster Abbey. The effect of the Alhambra depended much upon the same principle; for, although that edifice had filled the world with its renown and beauty, it was comparatively a small building, and was, in fact, judged by an artificial scale.

Gradation was another element of grandeur. The grouping of the different buildings of various sizes on the Acropolis of Athens, so as to increase the dignity of the Parthenon, was a striking proof of this. It was seen also in the admirable shawls of Cashmere in the late Exhibition, in which the magnitude of a large scroll was apparently increased by its being

placed in juxtaposition with a small one. The use of a minor order by Palladio, in subordination with the main one, was another illustration of the rule. Sansovino produced the same effect by using a small order for his openings; and Vignola, by producing windows and other important features on a small scale, and by the use of quoins stones. His small order was always perfect and complete, and carefully placed out of the reach of any points of comparison with the surrounding buildings. The upper decorated portions of Gothic cathedrals were highly elaborated, with the same results,—as might be seen in the sculptures of the west front of Wells; the figures in which, though only three or four feet high, appeared much larger, and filled the mind with images of grandeur and importance. In the cathedrals, also, the gradation from the large arches of the nave to the smaller arches of the aisles, and thence to those of window, the triforium, and the decorative canopies, was ever present, with the best effect.

Commensuration, or the geometrical principle, in art, was next adverted to, with reference to the same end. The application of the square and the triangle to the plans of ancient buildings, especially Gothic, was elucidated; and the use of geometrical arrangement by the architects of the Revival, pointed out.

The last element of grandeur might be described as arising from the association of ideas, which imparted a large and massive effect to small edifices built of large stones. The architects of Rome and Egypt understood this rule; and so great was the impression of size conveyed by the Pantheon and Carnae, from the use of large materials, that it was difficult to believe their actual smallness when drawn to the same scale as the cathedrals of Antwerp or Salisbury. The late Mr. Brunel was first led to adopt England as his home from an association of ideas of this kind. Seeing in France an immense cylinder, which had been sent from England, he placed upon his head the cocked hat which he then wore, and walked through it. He was thus impressed with the extraordinary character of British skill and science, and became a citizen of the country upon which his works have conferred such glory and renown. The effect of large stones was doubtless great in a heroic age. They were frequently adverted to in the Scriptures, and by Homer; and it might be remarked, that their employment had much increased in this country within living memory. Sir C. Wren was in part compelled to adopt a double order for St. Paul's, by the difficulty of obtaining large blocks of stone; but by the example of Rennie and Sir Robert Smirke, they had been largely introduced, and in the British Museum upwards of 800 stones had been employed, weighing from five to nine tons each.

The lecturer concluded by enforcing the necessity of careful and laborious study, without which all rules of proportion must be far from perfect.

THE FATE OF THE EXHIBITION BUILDING.

THE Commissioners appointed by the Treasury to inquire and report on the proposed purchase and appropriation of the Glass Palace have concluded their investigation. They have taken the evidence of Sir Charles Fox, Sir Joseph Paxton, Mr. Dilke, Mr. Cole, Mr. Hawkins, of the British Museum, Mr. Kelk, and others; and the various suggestions for the future use of the building were fully considered: among these, were the projects for a winter garden,—a gallery in aid or relief of the British Museum,—and an industrial and educational institute, to combine the leading scientific societies of London, the School of Design, &c. The questions of site and cost were necessarily carefully considered. It appears that there is a project for removing the transept, with a certain portion of the nave east and west, and re-erecting it in Kew-gardens; but we are not able to state that the Commissioners have yet agreed upon any report. The ultimate decision (subject to the sanction of Parliament) will rest with the Lords of the Treasury.